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# The Independent Republic Quarterly

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A Journal devoted to encouraging the study of the history of Horry County, S.C., to preserving information and to publishing research, documents, and pictures related to it.

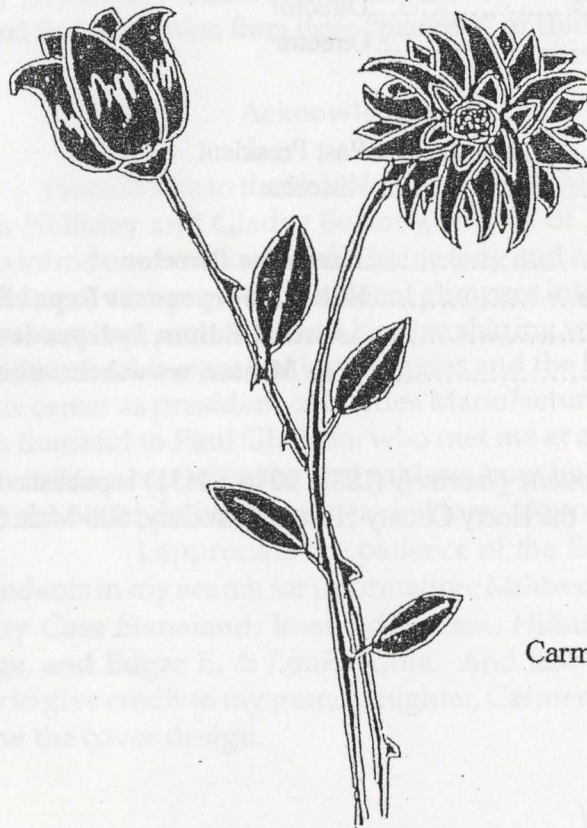
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## *Sketches of Horry County people*

Orall Histories from the files  
of Mrs. Wynness Thomas



Carmen Thomas

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**The Horry County Historical Society**  
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Editor's Note

One of the greatest contributors to the *Independent Republic Quarterly* in recent years is Mrs. Wynness Thomas. All of the oral histories preserved in this edition of the *Independent Republic Quarterly* are the labors of Mrs. Thomas. The interviews are of ordinary people who have been recognized by Mrs. Thomas as "pioneers" because they prepared the way for others to follow. It is the hopes of both Mrs. Thomas and myself that you enjoy and find inspiration from these "pioneers" of Horry County.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Janet Jones, Sarah McMillan, Elizabeth Holliday and Gladys Bellamy, friends of "Miss Maud," who introduced me to this admirable lady and also her daughter Evelyn, who provided personal glimpses into her mother's character. I appreciate Eldred Hardee sharing with me around the kitchen table, some of his struggles and the high moments in his career as president of Hardee Manufacturing Company. I am thankful to Paul Gladson, who met me at a fast-food restaurant for a cup of coffee and told me how he came to work with the bread delivery business in Horry County.

I appreciate the patience of the Edge family descendants in my search for information: Mildred Case Holmes, Mary Case Stanaland, Isaac Edge Case, Hilburn & Nathalie Edge, and Edgar E. & Louise Gore. And last of all, I would like to give credit to my granddaughter, Carmen Thomas, who drew the cover design.

Wynness Thomas





"Miss Maud"

In early years Horry County citizens were isolated in small communities by swamps, rivers, and bays, so they were forced to use innovative ways to produce what they needed for a livelihood. People grew accustomed to making their own decisions and were not easily swayed by advice from "outsiders;" thus the county acquired the name, "The Independent Republic."

Charles and Maud Snider of Conway, like those early pioneers, learned "to make do or do without." At the turn of the century Charles built an elaborate water system from an artesian well; Maud made preserves from wild fruit; and they raised sheep to mow the large front lawn. Staunch Christians, their faith played a major role in their early conservation efforts, as well as in their relationships with others.

The Snider story began with Maud's parents, John Asa Mayo and Lucy Elizabeth Burroughs Mayo, who moved to Conway from Martin County, North Carolina, in 1869. The Mayo's first home was on Seventh Avenue between Elm and Laurel streets. Later when Maud's father decided to purchase property, he considered two lots, one on what is now Racepath Street and the other on Kingston Lake. The lake, then not an attractive body of water, was fouled with rubble from a saw-mill, grist mill, a cotton gin and a turpentine still on its banks. River boats plied the water, carrying supplies and scattering debris. So it was not the lake, but a stately oak tree with majestic spreading branches, that convinced John Mayo to buy the Kingston Lake house from Alexander Elliott.

The house had been built on a bluff about 35 feet above the lake, with the land gradually sloping to the edge of the water. It was in this home that Maud Mayo was born in 1878.

A problem plagued both the Elliotts and the Mayos: they were unable to get water from a shallow well. The Mayos hauled water from the lake to use for scrubbing the floor and the family washing. For cooking, they caught rain water from



the roof, filtered it in tubs of charcoal, ran it into a cistern, and then pumped out the water as needed. Drinking water was obtained from the Peggy Ludlum Spring about a hundred yards away across the sawdust road. (Sawdust from the sawmill nearby was poured on this road, thus its name.)

### THE MAYO FAMILY

Maud was one of 10 children born to John and Lucy Mayo. Of the 10, one girl and four boys died in infancy. Those surviving were the five Mayo sisters: Carrie, Augusta (Gussie), Lucy (Lutie), Anna and Maud. As a child Maud could not pronounce "Anna," so she called her sister "Tanny," which was later shortened to "Tan."

Maud was very young when the Charleston earthquake occurred in 1886, but she always remembered the tremors during the night. She also remembered getting up the next morning and being very much disappointed that there were no big cracks in the ground.

As a small girl, one of Maud's favorite places to play was under a walnut tilt-top table. With the top down and the table cloth hanging over the sides, Maud was happy in her own little world. She liked the table so much that one day she said, "Mama, will you give me this table?"

Her mother promised that she would, then forgot and promised it to Gussie also. Later when Maud saw the table in Gussie's house, determined to have her inheritance, Maud picked it up and carried it home.

### BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL

After graduating from the Burroughs School in Conway, Maud was told by her uncle, Frank Burroughs, that he would pay her tuition to Greensboro Female Institute so that she could room with his daughter, Lella, a dear friend as well as a cousin. There Maud enrolled in additional courses of study and completed two years' work in a single year, earning the credentials to teach.

As a new teacher, Maud was eager to share her knowledge with her students. She taught in several schools in Horry County and, as was the custom, boarded in the community. At Cool Spring she taught music lessons in exchange for her board. Her father sent someone with the horse and buggy to bring her home on Friday afternoons and drive her back on Sunday afternoons. Sometimes the trip itself was an adventure. Once she was crossing a branch after a drenching rain, and the water came over the buggy's floorboard. To keep dry, she sat on the back of the seat.

Maud's experiences in North Carolina were quite different. There the school board assigned her different homes in the community in which to stay. One was so unsanitary that the only thing she felt safe to eat was a baked sweet potato because it had to be peeled. An additional inconvenience was the matter of the lamp. Every morning she would clean her lamp chimney in order to have a clear light to study by and correct papers that night. When she arrived from school in the afternoon, she would find the clean lamp replaced with a sooty chimney.

But conditions were not always unpleasant. Boarding in another home she found not only a clean room and delicious food, but heartwarming companionship. In an interesting twist of fate, Maud's daughter Evelyn years later taught the grandson of this family at Campbell College.

Maud liked to travel. In the 1890s she joined a group visiting California and the northwest - a trip she would refer to the rest of her life.

### MAUD AND CHARLES

In 1902 Maud married Charles H. Snider, an innovative young man from Elloree, South Carolina, who had come to Conway as a bookkeeper for the Gully Store. Their two boys, Ernest David and Roland Manley, died as infants, but little Evelyn brought them much joy. Charles was later employed by the Conway Lumber Company, the Waccamaw Line of



Steamers, and retired after 25 years as city clerk of Conway.

Charles Snider's devotion to his family, church and community was plain to see. He was a deacon, teacher and church clerk and served on various church committees. One of his civic projects was the beautification of the streets of Conway and Lakeside Cemetery where, today, blooming dogwoods and lush green cedars attest to his planning.

### THE WATER SITUATION

Maud inherited the home place from her parents. Charles tore down the original house in 1908, when Evelyn was a year old, and used the materials from the old house in the new building. Along with the home place, Maud and Charles also inherited the water problem. Maud, not one to complain, was excited, however, when Charles began making plans to have an artesian well dug. The pipe went down about 500 feet and produced a good flow of water which was piped to the house, meaning no more traipsing across the sawdust road. But since the water flowed constantly, there had to be some way to drain it from the house. Charles' solution was to pipe the overflow into an oblong, three-foot-high brick holding container in a gazebo to serve as a refrigerator. A shelf was located about three inches under the surface of the water and fashioned to hold deep pans of milk. The cream was skimmed off the exposed surface and used to make butter. Maud also sank jars of milk into the water and brought them up for a delicious cold drink at mealtime. The overflow from this outdoor refrigerator was piped into a thirty by six by four-foot swimming pool, which Charles dug in the side yard at the edge of the bluff. He made the pool, which was Conway's first, of ten-inch cypress boards and caulked the seams with oakum (hemp fiber). Six-foot pine walls on each side provided privacy. Dressing rooms were added at one end.

And did the children come! Though an interested observer, Maud never learned to swim, but she was keenly interested in the many boys and girls in Conway who accomplished

this feat in the cold artesian water. The pool was emptied and cleaned by scraping the inside with a corn cob (a naturally made steel-wool pad) about every other Saturday, and it gradually filled by Wednesday. The pool's overflow was piped into the lake. Thus the artesian water was pumped first to the house, overflowed to the outdoor refrigerator, overflowed next to the swimming pool, and finally into the lake. This system was characteristic of the Sniders' conservation of nature's gifts.

Eventually uninvited guests came to swim, and Maud found people whom she had never seen before in her bedroom. "The pool is becoming a nuisance and a hazard," she told Charles, so he had it filled with dirt.

Maud had no reservations about her husband's ingenious projects, another of which was called the "shute de shute." She watched with interest as Charles built a track from the top of the bluff to the lake. She then became a willing participant with the children as they crawled into a boat fitted to the track and, amid laughter and screams, plunged down to the water. With a rope attached to the rear of his car, Charles pulled the boat back up the hill. This water sport, along with fireworks, presented quite an attraction on the Fourth of July. Maud relished these events and also took much pleasure in quieter boat rides on the lake with Charles and Evelyn.

### TRIPS TO NEW TOWN (MYRTLE BEACH)

Charles Snider and John Spivey owned a beach cottage named "The Two Sisters," for their wives, Maud and Anna. A visit to the cottage was a big event. Maud gathered food, bedding and supplies in preparation for the 14 mile trip by train. When the family reached the beach, they carried the gear a mile from the depot to the house, which had no running water or electricity. Here, life was stripped to the bare necessities, allowing for full enjoyment of the strand and ocean.

The first task was usually to place the privy upright, having been blown over by strong ocean breezes during the winter. Maud would check to see if the shallow-well pump



needed priming, and she was thankful that the Burroughs and Collins general store was less than a mile away for any extra supplies they might need.

Late in the afternoons Maud, Charles and Evelyn would frequently walk down the strand to the place where the men were seining for fish, and would often be given all they could eat or perhaps charged a dime.

On the lot adjoining "The Two Sisters," Charles Snider's parents from Kingstree built a cottage and named it "The Turtle Nest." Soon after the name was posted on a sign, a turtle laid her eggs under the house. Later, when told about the event, Will Bryan, a neighbor, looked at Mrs. Snider very seriously and said, "Years ago I caught that turtle at Little River and taught it to read."

During those days no one became upset about hurricanes and September storms. The Sniders and other strand dwellers just stayed snug in their houses built high on pilings until the tempests blew over. During one squall Maud was preparing lunch, and Evelyn went to look out the window at the ocean. She saw a plank, caught by wind blowing with such violence that the board was standing upright on the water.

#### MAUD SNIDER, THE TEACHER

When Evelyn and a number of her friends were old enough for the first grade, several parents persuaded Maud to start a private school. Classes were held in the front room of the house. The dozen or more students sat on benches around a long, low table. The school lasted several years, and the students apparently found it absorbing.

One day, a father came for his daughter and told her that a wonderful thing had happened: she had a baby sister. The student was having such a good time at school that she asked him, "Do I have to go home?"

When the private school was discontinued, Evelyn entered public school in the fifth grade, and later Maud became

a substitute teacher in all grades of the Burroughs school. Teachers who had to miss a day held no qualms about calling her to take their classes. They knew she did not just "baby sit" but was well qualified to teach almost any subject. She was an excellent grade school teacher and could manage well the high school subjects of English, history, Latin and algebra but was sometimes at a loss in science. But even in science she proved resourceful. The family had attended the World's Fair in Chicago in 1933 and, later, the World's Fair in New York City. In Chicago, they had toured the General Motors building and the Astronomy building. If Maud were called on to substitute in science, she would draw on her storytelling abilities and share with the students her visits to these interesting places. She had a knack for holding a person's attention and was known as one of the best storytellers in Horry County.

Maud was an educator all her life. Nieces and nephews who had problems in their studies were advised to "Go see Aunt Maud." She also did private tutoring. Perhaps it was because her peers recognized her thirst for knowledge and interest in education that she became the first woman public school trustee in Horry County.

As Conway's population increased, "one-teacher" schools grew to "two-teacher" schools. Maud was the first "third teacher" hired for the town's schools.

#### THE CIRCUIT-RIDING MISSIONARY

Public education was only a part of Maud's interests. She was an integral part of First Baptist Church. She spent many hours every week preparing a Sunday School lesson. Once, after studying and coordinating the unit lessons for the entire month, she taught the lesson for the wrong Sunday. She carried study materials in one end of her basket and, in the other end, fresh flowers to put in the classroom. The family was never late for Sunday School.

During church Charles sat in the "amen" corner with the men and once a month would get up and announce "Col-



lection today for the orphanage." Maud sat with the women on the other side of the church when she was not playing the piano. She promoted missions among the women and once presented an inspiring speech on the Cooperative Program. This was a new financial plan of church giving for Southern Baptists at that time.

She is lovingly remembered for her annual Christmas dialogue about Lottie Moon. With hands clasped before her, she compassionately told her captivated audience about the woman who gave her life in God's service to the Chinese people.

All the missions organizations of the church were of special interest to Maud. During one period, she and Elizabeth Holliday worked with the Sunbeam Band, 25 children from ages five to eight, who met at the Snider house once a week. Because no man would consent to be the director, she volunteered to lead the Royal Ambassadors (RA's) for boys. She supervised their baseball game, then moved into the formal part of the meeting, always firm about proper behavior. Maud set high standards for the boys, and by her own lifestyle taught them to "give the best you have and the best will come back to you."

On various occasions, Maud and eight or nine RA boys would take a two-mile nature hike. They left the Snider home in the early afternoon with a bag lunch, walked through the cemetery, crossed a "foot log" over a ditch and trekked through the woods to a rustic wooden shack known as Tarzan's cabin. They played games in the cleared area around the cabin, then ate lunch. On the outing, Maud told them the names of various trees and wild flowers. If a snake was seen, no one was permitted to kill it. She told them, "Snakes have a place in the world of nature; walk around them and give them room."

At various other times Maud directed the Girls Auxiliary and the Young Women's Auxiliary. Early on Sunday afternoon she often traveled to other churches to help lay the foundations for these organizations. One task in which she

labored faithfully was the establishment of Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Baptist churches throughout Horry County. Dr. Joe Dusenbury, a neighbor and brother-in-law, placed his horse Brownie and a buggy at her disposal. The determined pioneer, with her daughter Evelyn, visited churches all over the county, organizing and promoting missions. They often spent the night in a home in the community, occasionally driving to another church the next day. These overnight stays in strange beds sometimes brought little Evelyn unwanted bedfellows (bedbugs), but they never seemed to bother her mother. Once they stayed in a home in the Tilly Swamp community, and the hostess gave Evelyn a small kitchen which she named "Traveler" because it was to travel on the circuit before they reached home.

Maud served as superintendent of the associational WMU for over 20 years, then trained her successors. She remained active as long as her health permitted, giving constant encouragement to the new leaders. She gave an inspirational address at the annual associational WMU meeting in 1935 and again in 1946, urging pastors to organize a WMU in their churches.

Of this work, one historian wrote, "We are confident that she was the one who worked for this organization for many months before it became a reality and that it was born as a result of her vision, devotion and efforts."

Maud's mission endeavors were the reflection of her favorite Bible verse, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28 RSV.

#### DO LORD, TAKE ME NOW

Maud took a special interest in needy people. One such person was a woman whom hardly anyone could tolerate, not even members of her own family. Maud periodically made soup and walked a mile to the woman's house to deliver it. She soon discovered that the woman would save the soup for



her two sons who were constantly in and out of the county jail, so she decided to stay until the soup was eaten. After several weeks, her visits began to follow a set pattern. When the woman heard Maud's foot on the steps she would begin moaning, "O Lord, O Lord, why can't you take me? I am so sick." Maud listened to one tale of woe after another, and finally in exasperation told her, "If you can't get along with people here, how do you expect to get along with them in heaven!" The moaning even continued after she left. Once Maud hid behind a tree in the yard, only to hear the wailing stop immediately.

#### THE COCK AND THE HEN

One of Maud's hobbies was raising chickens in a fenced pen by the barn. When the eggs hatched, Maud was as happy as if she had done the job herself. But when the cute, fuzzy little chicks grew to be frying size, she had no compunction whatsoever about expertly wringing their necks and frying them for Sunday dinner.

One weekend Evelyn came home from college and noticed her mother depressed and crying occasionally.

"What's the matter, Mama?" Evelyn asked, expecting to be told about the death of a dear friend.

"The dogs broke into my chicken pen and killed nearly all of my chickens," she said, wiping her eyes.

On days when the weather was bad, Maud invited her nieces and nephews to the barn to shell corn. They thought it was fun to place an ear of corn in the sheller, turn a hand crank several times, and see the bare cob fall out the other end. After the corn was milled, Maud sifted the meal and used the coarse husks to make corn bread for the chickens.

One of her mottoes was, "Use it up, make it do, do without," which she applied to every facet of her life. Evelyn was on the staff of the high school annual, *The Mirror*, and Maud used the leftover books to make her scrapbooks, pasting articles and clippings on the pages. She made quilts from dress

scraps and woolen samples, and dish cloths out of flour sacks. Leaves were raked in piles to decay and be used as fertilizer. The food that was cooked was eaten and any scraps were fed to the chickens.

#### EARTHA AND ONEX

During the early 1940s, the Sniders could find no one to mow their huge lawn, so they fenced in the yard and bought three sheep. Maud loved the sheep whom she affectionately named and saw that they were watered, fed and sheltered. She had them sheared and paid a woman to remove the cockleburs, wash and card the wool, which was made into a mattress.

Once when Evelyn was visiting a friend in Rock Hill, she received a telegram from her mother. This was in the days when the arrival of a telegram more than likely signified a death in the family. However, this message read, "Onex arrived yesterday stop Mother and baby doing well."

Evelyn read and reread the words, pondering their meaning. She finally decided that Eartha, one of the sheep, had given birth, and the lamb was named Onex because it was "on-expected."

#### TASTY DRINKS AND SUN-COOKED PRESERVES

Maud was a good cook, though not a fancy one. The family's diet consisted mainly of vegetables from the garden: squash, tomatoes, garden peas, beans, collards and other greens. Maud cooked fried chicken and fried fish, but meat was not on the menu every day. She was skillful at baking biscuits, cakes, pies and desserts.

One of Maud's specialties was delicious sun-cooked strawberry preserves. She would pick and clean the strawberries, then cook them with sugar until the sugar dissolved. The preserves were placed in large platters out in the sun to finish cooking. The platters were covered with netting to protect the fruit from bees, yellow jackets and other insects. If Maud and



Evelyn were visiting at a neighbor's house and a dark cloud came up, Maud would say, "Let's go home, Evelyn. We have to bring in the preserves before it rains." The "bringing in" and "carrying out" was a tiresome job.

In the late summer Evelyn and her neighbor Sara, hunted and picked haws growing on river banks, and Maud cooked them into a flavorsome jelly. (A haw is the fleshy berry of the hawthorn shrub, also called Thorn Apple, that grows on river banks. Its white blossoms turn into small orange-scarlet pomes resembling a small apple.)

Other distinctive homemade products of Maud's were grape, strawberry, and blackberry acids - tangy drinks served as appetizing refreshments at Sunday School parties and WMU meetings.

On one occasion Maud ran into trouble with her berry picking. She and a friend went some distance from town and discovered a luscious patch of wild blackberries. They were busy picking when a woman suddenly appeared on the side of a ditch. With arms akimbo she yelled, "I don't let my own young'un pick them berries, much less you off-comers!"

Maud was not so devoted to cooking that she never ate out. Once she and Evelyn decided to try a new place on Fourth Avenue called "The Sandwich Shop." Maud rolled down the window on her side of the car and thought she was being complimentary to the young man who came out to give them curb service. "You have a nice place here," she said. "I suppose you have a lot of patronage."

"No ma'am!" he replied. "Nothing like that goes on around here."

#### HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

Maud became a mentor for two black boys who helped her in the yard. One of them graduated from college and became a teacher. She befriended two other little boys, at separate times, who needed a temporary home. Baby-sitting with nieces and nephews was a common practice, while their par-

ents traveled with a sick child to the doctor in another town. One niece delighted in these overnight visits because of Maud's delicious supper: buttermilk and raisin bread.

One young girl was fascinated by Miss Maud's attic. She thought it was fantastic, and the view was breathtaking as one looked out over the lake. But the young girl's mission in the attic one day in 1920 was to look for pictures to use in a school project. There she found years' worth of *The Ladies Home Journal* and other magazines neatly arranged, tagged and catalogued from January through December. Maud's scrapbooks of clippings from *The Baptist Courier* and *The Sunday School Times* also were there. She had amassed a great fund of information, easily retrieved.

Maud's large colorful collection of baskets was not just to be admired. She used them to take flowers and food to the homebound or cookies to the children in another section of the "borough." Many young mothers struggling with growing families were comforted and encouraged by "Miss Maud," as she was affectionately known. As she never learned to drive a car, she walked all over town, spreading loving care.

Christmas was a time of celebration. Maud's sisters and their families always came to the old home place on Christmas Day. The Christmas tree reached almost to the high ceiling of the dining room. Maud taught her nieces to string cranberries and popcorn, then they gingerly placed their finished chains among the thorny green holly leaves with their bright red berries. For the final touch she tied small presents on the tree and placed larger ones between the branches.

Maud's interests also included her yard. She had a devotion for flowers and was a member of a garden club for a short period of time. Her first love was day lilies, and she was the first person in Conway to order a particular species of day lily. She passed on her interest in these flowers to her friend, Mrs. Cuba Rutledge, who later became State Garden Club president. Mrs. Rutledge spread the information about day lilies throughout the state.



Maud and Charles also planted tea olives, camellias and azaleas on their property. These, along with daffodils, jonquils, a Japanese Magnolia, and others, may still be seen flaunting their blossoms each spring as a result of Maud's labors of love.

Her affection for home in no way diminished her desire to travel. One of Charles' brothers lived in Havana, Cuba, and provided an excellent opportunity to visit that city. Another trip was made around the border of the state of South Carolina. Roads as near to the North Carolina and Georgia line as possible were chosen, and on this tour their admiration deepened for their home state.

Maud Mayo Snider was a woman of determination, courage and perseverance, a true pioneer of the Independent Republic. A friend spoke of her as a "Worthy woman far above the average." Every town has a personality and character all its own, and Maud left her mark on Conway through her faith, her care and concern for other people, and her loving relationship with her natural surroundings. Her ability to live in such harmony with the spiritual and physical world was expressed in one of her mottoes:

For every evil under the sun,  
There is a remedy, or there is none.  
If there is one, try to find it,  
If there is none, never mind it.

Charles died in 1943, and in her later years Maud was afflicted with angina. Her health further deteriorated after a stroke, and she was confined to a wheelchair. On July 30, 1948, First Baptist Church lost one of its most faithful members, the community lost one of its most interesting citizens, and countless people lost a dear friend.

Her influence as an educator went far beyond the schoolhouse. In the Sunday School department of First Baptist Church, she had taught every class except the Cradle Roll and was teacher of the Lydia Class for 25 years.

Former members of the Royal Ambassadors were pallbearers at her funeral, and honorary pallbearers were women of the Lydia Sunday School Class and of the WMU. Internment was in Lakeside Cemetery next to her husband, among flowers he had planted.

Her obituary in the church bulletin contained the following poem by Sir Edward Arnold:

"The one whom ye call dead  
In unspoken bliss instead,  
Lives and loves you; gone,  
'tis true,  
By such light as shines for you;  
But in light ye cannot see  
of unfulfilled felicity  
Lives a life that never dies."



## It Takes More Than Dreams



Barbara and Eldred Hardee and Gov. Robert McNair

By the usual rules for "growing" an industry, Hardee Manufacturing Company, Inc., shouldn't have made it. Eldred Hardee, its founder and president, had no formal engineering training. All he knew about such things as metal stress and tensile strength he picked up since making his first tractor-mounted tobacco sprayer in 1958.

The company's vice president and sales manager, Cecil Gause, had only minimal sales experience before signing on with the young plant. Like Hardee, he had been a small farmer, but wound up heading a sales force that broadened the Hardee product line into international markets.

The firm's secretary and business manager, Hoyt Hardee, had only 13 months of business school training and some on-the-job experience in bookkeeping and sales in a farm supply store before joining the rapidly expanding firm.

Then there was the work force. It was made up entirely of farm boys who grew up in rural communities surrounding the plant. Some had finished high school; others hadn't. To begin with, none had manufacturing experience and none had formal technical training.

### EARLY YEARS

The story of this home-grown, multi-million dollar company began in the 1930s, when Eldred Hardee, a native of the Simpson Creek community of Horry County, was old enough to help his father on their 100-acre farm.

Each of the five Hardee boys was assigned chores. Eldred's included operating a gristmill and working with farm machinery. He began to mend the combine and other farm equipment when they needed repairs and became so proficient at fixing things that he and his father went into a small partnership. His father furnished the equipment for farming, and Eldred maintained and paid for repairs. They shared the profits. As a result of this early business venture, Eldred was



able to buy a car in the early 1940s, making him one of only two students at Loris High School who owned a car.

By the time Hardee joined the U.S. Army, World War II was coming to a close. He completed 12 months of vocational agricultural training after receiving his honorable discharge in 1945. For two years he operated a general merchandise store, seven miles southeast of Loris near his father's farm.

One evening a friend of Hardee's was attending a birthday party and asked him to come along. Hardee decided he might as well, not knowing that someone at the party would change the course of his life forever - a pretty young girl named Barbara or "Bobbie" Anderson. They were married in 1946.

The following year the young couple moved to Loris, and with assistance of a loan from Farmer's Bank, Hardee built a home and went into the long-distance trucking business. For four years he traveled to New York, Chicago and over the United States, before he decided he was ready to settle down. He bought a 32-acre farm on Highway 31, 10 miles from Loris. Included in the farm was an allotment of 4.6 acres of tobacco - the primary source of income in an area where a farmer's wealth, or lack of it, could be estimated by the size of his tobacco field.

The couple settled down to become an integral part of the community. Bobbie was elected president of the Red Bluff Home Demonstration Club, which hosted home demonstration classes in sewing, canning and numerous other vital skills for the homemaker.

In 1958 the Home Demonstration Agent held an upholstering class, and Bobbie left with the idea for a new skill. She successfully upholstered her chairs and couch, then refinished a chair for her mother-in-law. Soon she had work from all over the northern part of the county - a helpful sideline while caring for her children, Ronald, Diane and Teresa. Bobbie continued her work for over 10 years.

## THE SHOP IN THE BACKYARD

ford to buy all of the farm equipment he needed. He began making certain pieces in his small welding shop behind the house, as well as repairing implements for neighbors.

Much of his time was spent in the shop designing a tobacco sprayer for his own use. It would mount on the rear of a farm tractor and was made specifically for operation in tobacco fields where every fifth row was unplanted. His long hours and hard work paid off when, finally, his finished product consisted of a sprayer with a welded frame to hold the drum and two spray arms. At the bottom of the barrel was a spray pump which fed the spray under pressure to two long arms hinged into the frame. An overflow hose returned excess fluid to the drum and kept the poison in the drum always mixed. A stout spring allowed the arms, if they should hit anything, to swing back freely to the side of the drum and then snap forward into spraying position again. Racks for the sprays could be constructed to fit any make tractor.

A neighbor asked to buy the sprayer, so Hardee made a second one, improving on the design. Others came by to see it and were so impressed that they wanted one also. Hardee sold 12 before the first unit was delivered, and soon he was busy turning out sprayers, trying to keep abreast of the rapidly growing demand for orders.

Realizing the sprayer's potential, Hardee began seeking financial assistance. After almost exhausting every effort, he was able to secure a \$2,000 loan from Peoples National Bank in Conway. With this loan he purchased an electric welder, cutting torch and grinder. Using this equipment and part-time help, he sold 300 during the spring of 1959.

In those early days, Joseph, David and Eddie Bellamy worked with Hardee through the day and frequently all night to meet orders. At night Wendell Hughes came in to paint all that had been constructed that day.

In 1960, with a loan of \$6,000, Hardee expanded the shop and built 700 units. When the business became too much to handle alone, he asked Cecil Gause, a neighbor, to come in as a



sales manager.

Business continued to expand and another loan was secured. This provided enough room to produce 1,500 units. During this time Hardee realized the need to operate year-round, as he was continually busy. His newest design, which he built and patented, was an offset rotary cutter. Soon the supply was barely able to keep up with the demand.

Hardee's contributions to the state's agricultural economy were noted by Gov. Ernest Hollings, who presented the young entrepreneur with an award for outstanding service to the people in South Carolina.

#### A GROWING INDUSTRY

By 1963, the company was growing at such a progressive rate that a loan of \$30,000 was obtained for further expansion. Everything looked prosperous. Hardee was in the process of building a new house and an addition to the company building, when at noon on April 17th, the plant burned to the ground in about 20 minutes, leaving nothing standing but steel beams.

It was in the middle of the busiest season for Hardee Manufacturing, so it was important to get back in production immediately. Within four days an empty building and part of a tobacco warehouse were rented, and the company was back in business without losing a single sale or man-hour.

"Considering a fire loss of approximately \$35,000 above insurance," Hardee now recalls, "we were extremely fortunate to meet all financial obligations without being late on a single payment."

Farsightedness paid off. The factory had built several pieces of equipment for inventory and stored them at Gause's farm. Now this inventory helped to tide the company over until a new plant could be constructed. Within 90 days a 15,000 square-foot building was completed.

After the fire Bobbie began assisting her husband with the business. She worked in the office, made bank deposits,

ran errands and was helpful in various ways while Hardee was busy with his newest product, a tandem tilt trailer used for hauling tractors and other heavy machinery. The company also started building herbicide sprayers, used for weed control on cotton.

With the industry growing so rapidly, Hardee again realized that he needed someone to share in the responsibilities. In June 1963, Hardee's brother, Hoyt, was persuaded to come into the business as a stockholder and business manager.

Charles Cook was now supervisor for plant operations, after having worked with Hardee in making the first products sold by the company. He was a recipient of the American Farm degree and formerly named State Farmer of the Year by the South Carolina Association of Future Farmers.

Another expansion was needed, and a loan of \$100,000 was secured in order to purchase a large press break machine and enlarge the building.

The business was incorporated in 1966 with Eldred V. Hardee as president and treasurer; Cecil M. Gause, vice president; and Hoyt J. Hardee, secretary. At that time a loan for \$200,000 was acquired for further expansion and to purchase additional machinery.

The company ordered a four-seater Piper Cherokee plane, which was used mainly to call on farm equipment dealers who handled Hardee equipment. Each member of the Hardee management staff became a licensed pilot. The plane also came in handy for flying in emergency parts or materials needed in the plant. The 2,850-foot grass landing strip behind the plant could also be used by sales representatives of Hardee suppliers and by customers who visited the plant.

Hardee Manufacturing Company made its first overseas shipment of farm equipment in 1966, sending it to Athens, Greece. First, the herbicide sprayers were loaded onto one of Hardee's tractor-trailer rigs and trucked to Norfolk, Virginia. From there they were shipped ocean freight to the Eli Lilly Corporation subsidiary Lapaharn, Inc., in Athens.

One of the memorable events in Hardee's career was



when Gov. Robert McNair presented him with an award as "South Carolina Small Businessman of the Year." The ceremony highlighted the National Small Business Week, May 21-27, 1967. Hardee was one of those people whose names were submitted by the Atlanta Area Administrator to Washington, D.C., for consideration as National Small Businessman of the Year.

Hardee Manufacturing Company was among companies invited to set up a display in the State House lobby in 1967 to illustrate the progress of industrial development in the state. Canadian businessmen saw it, and Hardee Manufacturing began to receive orders from their dealership.

Another expansion of the building added 12,000 square feet, which was used for the "forming" phase of the manufacturing process in which workers shape the style of farm trailers, rotary cutters, sprayers, small cultivators, tractor bumpers and other miscellaneous items.

For many years, visitors to the plant were as likely to find the company president on the plant floor as in his office - his hands still bearing the grease smudges of a mechanic. One of the reasons for Hardee's dirty hands was the "Tiger" rotary cutter, a large, lawn mower-type implement which was mounted on a farm tractor. This cutter, with its offset position, saved many man-hours while working on hedgerows and ditch banks. It had a special hookup, allowing it to be quickly changed to a straight-behind position, and came with a hay-cutting attachment and a puncture-proof tire. It was available in several sizes.

"After I built the ditch-bank cutter for myself and used it on my farm," Hardee said, "I mass-produced it and sold over \$20 million of that one piece of equipment. It paid off for the company."

Other new items were farm and industrial trailers, ranging from the size pulled behind a golf cart to industrial models with a 10-ton load capacity. These were manufactured on an assembly line. Another first was the liquid-fertilizer applicator.

Hardee conducted the field testing of equipment either on the farm or under conditions in which the machines would be used. The result was that very few pieces ever came back to the dealer. Another reason may have been the workers.

Employees at the plant were typical of the many farm youths entering agricultural occupations other than farming. Most of them were part-time farmers. They knew from experience what the equipment was supposed to do when it went to the dealers. This gave them pride in turning out a quality product. "Farmers designing and building equipment for other farmers" has long been the theme of the company.

Ernest Snavelly was appointed chief engineer in 1970. A graduate of the University of Iowa with a bachelor of science in agricultural engineering, he had extensive experience both in agricultural engineering and as a university teacher.

Through the years Hardee continued to design and build. Some of his products are a disc harrow, stumpburner, airport mower-decks for trucks, lawn and garden equipment, boxscraper and motorcycle trailer.

Taking part in community affairs was another way Hardee utilized his time. He was appointed to the Horry County Airport Commission in 1971 and served about 20 years. He served on the board of directors of National Bank of South Carolina for seven years and the Horry County Pork Board for two years. But Hardee's interests have always included farming. As the years passed he increased his 32-acre spread to several hundred acres, and he also raised livestock.

#### RETIREMENT

In the 1990s, Hardee began to think of retirement. He considered all his options and came up with Williams Controls, a Portland, Oregon-based company with a 70-year history. Like Hardee, its founder Norm Williams had started his company from scratch. In 1995, Hardee sold 80 percent of the company to Williams Controls, Inc., which today makes accessories for trucks and utility vehicles. The name was changed



So what accounts for the success that delivered Hardee Manufacturing from a small welding shop to a diversified farm equipment plant?

Hoyt Hardee said, "I think our success was due basically to our commitment to the farming experience. Farmers knew their implements had to be built ruggedly. Also our location in a rural setting had a lot to do with it. We provided jobs for local people and income for part-time workers. The merchants in the Loris area also benefited from the over \$1 million annual payroll here."

"We began production of sprayers suited to the farmer's needs and first sold to local dealers, then moved to a North Carolina distributor. We employed as many as 170 people at one time and sold to nine Southern states, also westward to Texas and Arkansas, and as far north as Maryland."

Eldred Hardee sums it up as, "Hard work, some good luck and utilization of natural abilities which were just waiting to be tapped. Many faithful employees were with us 30 years or longer. And then as we began to enlarge, we were grateful to local banks that were willing to extend credit to a small business like ours. This made it possible to continue expanding. I also give credit to my family and my wife, who have continually supported me with encouragement. Bobbie stood by me through those lean years and has been my 'side-kick' all along."

The speaker welcomed the guests seated around the large U-shaped table and asked each one to rise, give his name and tell where he was from.

Paul Gladson stood, cleared his dry throat, spoke and sat down.

"Why are they laughing?" he asked his friend.

"Don't you know what you said?" was his reply. "You said, 'I'm Mr. Sunbeam Bread from Conway, South Carolina.'"

The year was 1951 and Paul Gladson was visiting in Cincinnati, Ohio, as supervisor of Sunbeam Bread's Conway territory. The young man had won the trip by writing a short essay on how to increase bread sales one loaf per stop per day.

His nervous self-introduction reflected how completely Gladson had transferred his Depression-era work ethic to the company that now gave him his livelihood. It was a demanding and competitive job. Once it even threatened his life.

#### GROWING UP IN GEORGETOWN COUNTY

Paul Gladson grew up on a farm in the Sampit section of Georgetown County, 15 miles west of Georgetown. His earliest recollection is of his grandmother's burial in 1922 in the family plot about 100 yards from the kitchen window. His grandfather, a Confederate soldier, was buried there as well. The Gladson clan could name nine members who had served on the Union side and seven on the Confederate.

Paul was the second son of seven children born to G.D. and Carrie Gladson. He had an older brother Albert and five younger sisters: Etta Lee, Bernice, Lena, Mary and Betty.

Gladson was about 12 years old at the beginning of the Great Depression. In what became essentially a cashless society, Paul filled a vital role in providing for his family. Returning from school on Friday afternoons, his chore was to load the one-horse wagon with poultry and farm produce. In the





Paul Gladson

spring and summer this consisted of live fryers, eggs, butter, corn, butterbeans, watermelons and cantaloupes. In the winter his cargo consisted of sweet potatoes, eggs, sugar cane, turnips and collards, a couple of hogs or a dressed cow. Since cattle were permitted free range at the time, Paul and his father had to scour the woods for one of their cows, kill it on the spot, hang it on a tree to butcher, then haul it home for selling the next day.

About four o'clock on Saturday morning, Paul and his father hitched the horse to the loaded wagon and began the 15-mile walk to Georgetown. They traveled from house to house, peddling produce. Anything left over was used to barter with the grocer before starting home. Paul's world was basically a cashless society.

About dark, his dog Rocky would hear the wagon a half mile from home and run to meet them. The rest of the family followed, eager to see what the two had brought from town. No one ate, however, until the horse was fed and watered. For 10 years, she made trips to town, plowed the 20-acre farm and hauled wood for cooking and heating. Old Bell was like a member of the family.

The Gladsons lived in a four-room house, with a separate kitchen and dining room located about 15 feet behind the house. In winter, the children warmed themselves by the fireplace in the front room, then dashed outside in the cold to the dining room and kitchen to eat meals.

Paul's parents were sincere Christian people. Prayer and Bible reading were a part of the daily schedule before the children left for school every morning. Everyone attended church on Sundays and a favorite family story is told about returning from services one cold winter day. Paul, huddled in the foot of the buggy under the lap robe, was apparently pondering the minister's various sermons about the Apostle Paul. Suddenly he peered out from under the cover and inquired, "Why is it the preacher always preaches about me, and he never preaches about Bubba?"



## READING, WRITING, ARITHMETIC AND SMOKING

Paul entered high school and began to study agriculture. One project he enjoyed was raising baby chicks, or biddies. He began this undertaking with dreams of purchasing his very first gun. By the time the prime batch of biddies reached frying size, he discovered a lawyer in town who had a shotgun and a rifle for sale. After agonizing several days over which gun to buy, Paul finally made the trade: 15 fryers for the double-barrel shotgun.

Paul's physical and spiritual needs were taken care of, and he was in the eighth grade before he realized that money was a necessary commodity. A pretty little girl sold candy bars, two for a nickel, during recess, and he did not have any hard cash.

The following year, Paul left high school and took a job as water boy with the Works Progress Administration (WPA) at 40 cents a day. After two weeks his pay was raised to 50 cents a day and he was proud of helping his father feed the family. The 12-hour-a-day job consisted of repeatedly carrying two buckets of drinking water to laborers about half a mile from the well. But every night his mother would tell him, "Paul, if you don't finish high school, not a one of your sisters will graduate. You are setting a bad example."

After six weeks she convinced him to see the school administrator and ask if he could return to school. The principal, Mr. C.C. Garriss, told him, "I'll do whatever necessary to see that you finish, but I want you to do three things: read three books, give a report on them and quit smoking."

Paul agreed, read the three books, turned in the report and stopped smoking - for about two weeks. His experience with smoking went back to his grammar school days. As a young boy, he and his neighborhood friends learned to trade one egg for one cigarette at the country store across from Oak Grove School House. One day while waiting for the school bus, a stripped-down pickup truck, Paul found a hen's nest

store. Endless to say, by the time the bus jolted to a stop, all the eggs were broken and running down his legs. By afternoon his britches were starched with the sticky mess. His smoking eventually became a habit that he regretted ever beginning.

## STORE CLERK

After graduating from high school, Paul obtained work as a clerk in Mr. E.E. Poston's grocery store on Front Street in Georgetown. All produce was bought in bulk and had to be bagged and weighed. Rice was sold for four cents a pound, sugar for a nickel, and cheese for 15 cents. The price of cured hog jowl, known as butts meat, was three pounds for 10 cents. No fresh meat was sold because refrigeration was not yet available. The store cashed the customers' WPA checks, which generally ranged from \$7 to \$9. Gladson's pay was \$6 a week.

Several years later, earning \$12 a week clerking in Mr. Wilson's grocery and meat market, Paul told Wilson that his salary would not take care of the needs of his family with a wife and one child. Wilson said he could not increase his salary, so Paul began to look for another job.

## A NEW FRONTIER

Paul was hired by the Holsum Bread Company and in 1939 began traveling on rough, unpaved back roads making deliveries to little country stores in Georgetown County. His new career was interrupted by America's entering into the Second World War. Paul enlisted in the Merchant Marines and spent three years in the Maritime Union. After the war, the Holsum Bread Company asked him to return to work, and in September 1945, the company moved him from Kingstree to Georgetown. In 1947, he moved to Conway and began building bread routes.

White bread was unavailable immediately after the war because of the continuing shortages of sugar, shortening and



white flour. For six months the company tried to sell whole wheat bread with molasses substituted for sugar, but they could hardly give it away.

The shortage of bread was so great that when Holsum finally began selling white bread again, Gladson would plan his route the night before, deciding how many loaves to allocate to each customer. Store owners were waiting with the correct change when the truck arrived, and some would plead for another two loaves.

Traveling on unpaved roads was difficult. One stretch of road was so bad in wet weather that he always bogged down. A certain farmer, seeing his dilemma, often pulled him out of the mud with his team of mules. In dry weather, when the truck stopped, all the dust from the road came boiling about the body of the truck, seeping through the cracks. It settled on the loaves of bread sealed in wax paper and stacked loose in the body of the truck. Dust also surged through the doors of country stores and covered everything inside, including the bread rack. Trying to clean a rack almost proved to be Paul's downfall.

#### AN ANGRY LOSER

One day the owner of a little country store asked Paul inquisitively, "What are you doing?"

"I'm cleaning the bread rack," he replied, wiping it with a cloth.

"I do all the cleaning in my store," snorted the man.

"Well, I'll just help you out a little," Paul continued.

Suddenly the fellow rushed from behind the counter, clamped his hands about Paul's neck and began to choke him.

"What have I done?" Paul thought desperately. "The man is trying to kill me!" Somehow the bread man managed to squirm out of the grasp of his attacker. Then the enraged storekeeper began another physical assault with a punch on the shoulder and a job to the ribs.

About this time, a college student who worked with

Paul came into the store. When the student saw the commotion, instead of helping, he dropped the bread and dashed back outside.

Paul's infuriated attacker picked up a coke bottle to use as a club and started toward his victim. Paul pleaded with him to stop, and finally, with anger spent, his assailant put down the weapon.

"Do you want me to take the bread and leave?" Paul asked.

"No, Red" the owner replied, using the familiar nickname that he had made up for Paul. "Put your bread on the rack," he said calmly, with a complete Jekyll-and-Hyde personality change.

Later Paul learned that the storekeeper had lost a race for magistrate that day. Perhaps, he concluded, the man was just taking out his temper and frustration on the first available person.

#### A FORTUNE WITH SLICED BUNS

When Paul first began selling bread, Holsum was selling an unsliced 14-ounce loaf of bread for four cents wholesale and eight cents retail. The outside displayed a picture of a parrot saying, "Don't buy bread, buy Holsum." Another one-pound loaf sold for eight cents wholesale and 10 cents retail. Holsum changed its name to Sunbeam in 1951. Competition was often keen among Merita, Nabisco Biscuit Company (NBC) and Sunbeam.

Paul found a selling edge on a trip to Pennsylvania, where he toured a bakery and watched its workers performing a revolutionary new process - slicing hot dog and hamburger rolls. Paul came home and advised the local baking company that if Sunbeam sliced its rolls, it would gain a monopoly on the business in Myrtle Beach. And it did!

#### SELLING BREAD

Myrtle Beach's tourism industry demanded a whole



new approach to customer services. Every year around Easter, one restaurant owner called Paul at 2:00 a.m. and asked for a delivery of buns, saying he had run out. This wasn't true, but the purchaser said if the bread was not delivered immediately he would switch to another company. So Paul made this one delivery every year around 2:00 a.m. The owner sometimes teased him, saying he was just getting the bread man ready for the hectic summer season.

Another customer, Johnny Burroughs, who owned Peaches Corner at Ninth Avenue and Ocean Boulevard, persuaded the beef people to make a hot dog one inch shorter than the regular size. Sunbeam made a special bun for this short hot dog, and Burroughs sold them by the thousands.

One customer, who managed a hot-dog concession at Ocean Drive Beach, stationed his watchdog, Tony, near the kitchen door, where Paul habitually gave him a pat as he delivered bread through the back door. Before his death, the man willed his dog to Paul, who took the big mixed Labrador Retriever and Irish Setter to his home on the river. Eventually the dog began following the truck as it left the house. The beautiful animal met his demise taking a detour in the yard of a man with bantam chickens. He was shot with a rooster in his mouth.

#### COMPETITION AMONG THE BREAD MEN

Paul resorted to various tactics - as long as they were ethical - to place bread in stores and entice customers.

When bread was wrapped in wax paper with no seal on the end, the loaf was not visible through the wrapping. Once, Paul unsealed 50 loaves of bread, slipped a new one dollar bill into each and sealed them back with a candle. These loaves went all over the county, and soon everyone was looking for Sunbeam bread.

The hardest market he ever tried to break into was Conway, because everyone liked and respected the Merita salesman, Mr. John Shumpert. The 55-year-old Shumpert

would get up at 2:00 a.m., load his truck, put on his cowboy hat and deliver to all the stores in town. A big clock on his dashboard informed him of the time, and he delivered the bread to the front door of each establishment just before it opened.

Once Paul saw about 100 loaves of Merita bread stacked up in a store that was open on Sunday, which was unusual at that time. He said to the owner, "I'll bet you five dollars that you can't sell 50 loaves of Sunbeam bread this weekend." The proprietor bragged, "I can sell anything I want to sell." When the weekend was over Paul paid up on the five dollars, but after a second attempt at the same bet the man said, "I just can't do that to Mr. Shumpert," who was left with 50 loaves on the shelf!

In rare instances, Paul's bread didn't get to him on schedule. Since the bread was made in Orangeburg, about 130 miles from Conway and delivered on big freight trucks, occasional delays were inevitable. Once, while on a detour because of road construction, a truck became wedged underneath the iron angles of the Yahannah bridge. Traffic was stopped for six hours until workers finally released the vehicle.

Paul's routes gradually increased to include Myrtle Beach, Georgetown and Conway. In 1946 he became supervisor, then later, director of marketing for South Carolina and parts of Georgia and North Carolina. When he began working, his route was one of 10 routes. Forty-three years later at his retirement, 155 routes were in operation.

Gladson and his wife Emile live near Coastal Carolina University. They have two children, Dale Gladson and Dixie Lee Yates, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Gladson is retired, a member of Gideon's International, and a popular speaker at churches and civic clubs.



### The "Handy" Edge Family Of North Myrtle Beach

The firstborn son of Isaac Parker Edge was dead. He would need only the smallest of homemade coffins. It seemed a harsh blow to a young man who, in 1869, had settled with his lovely bride Cenith in the quiet, sparsely populated area which is now the Crescent Beach section of North Myrtle Beach.

Isaac owned a surplus of land on which to grow crops or raise cattle and could tap the pristine forests of trees for turpentine. The woods were alive with wild game that might provide food for the table. An ocean brimming with fish was only a short distance away. If supplies were needed, foxes, otters and minks could be trapped and their hides sold for cash.

The opportunities seemed unlimited, and the nickname given to Isaac by family and friends explained how he dealt with them. As a young boy, when people came to visit his parents, Isaac would offer them a chair or bring them a glass of water. Someone called him "Handy," and the title seemed to stick.

#### FARMING AND FAMILY

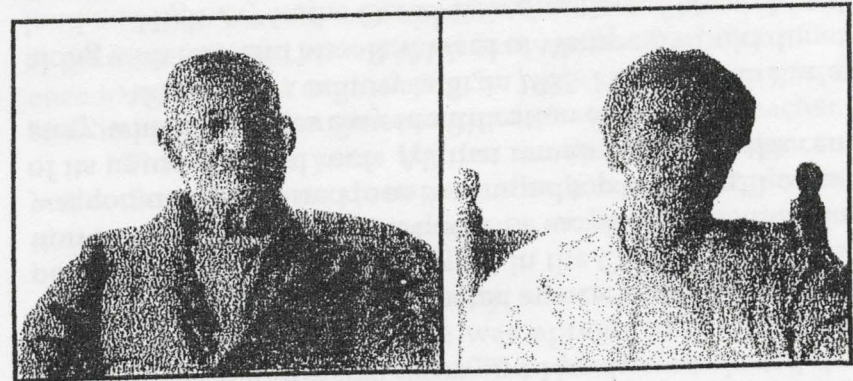
Time has a way of making the burden more bearable. As the years passed, the Edge family grew to include nine children: Alva (Alvie), Willie, Drucilla (Sister), Nathan (Nath), Mollie, Temperance, who died in infancy, Purley, Bell and Linnie.

Handy, Cenith and their descendants would be counted among the founding families of two Grand Strand beaches - Ocean Drive and Crescent Beach.

Sometime after the birth of Drucilla, a hurricane bore down on the coast. As the winds howled, Handy told the children to scurry under the bed for safety. A strong gust shook the house, and a wall came crashing down on the bed. When the storm subsided, Handy lifted the wall with his shoulder and broke his chest bone. The children were virtually un-

harmed, except for Willie, who had hurt his shoulder and would thereafter walk with a slight stoop.

After this incident, Handy decided to move farther from the beach. He built a house on what is now handy drive in the Forest Lake Subdivision of Ocean Drive Beach, near the course of the intracoastal waterway. He raised cows, hogs and sheep and sold wool. His bee hives produced an abundance of honey. He made molasses from sugar cane and stored it in 60-to 100-gallon barrels equipped with a spigot so one might "catch" a gallon at the time.



Issac and Cenith Edge

Handy cleared the land and planted cotton, corn, sweet potatoes and peanuts. His children helped him work the land, and they made it productive and prosperous.

One section of the farm, about three-tenths of a mile from the ocean, was called the beach field and contained a number of hickory trees. Handy gathered the hickory nuts and shelled them for Cenith to use in baking cakes. The farmer took pride in his sweet potatoes. As the vines grew, he hilled them up - hoeing a little mound around each plant to keep in the moisture and produce a better yield. In later years, his daughter Belle remembered feeling sorry for her father, working so hard in the field. With a hoe, she banked one row, but had the impression that her work did not meet with her father's approval.



"Belle, you go on to the house," directed her father, not wishing to hurt her feelings. "I enjoy doing this."

### A PRAYER MEETING ON THE STRAND

Every September, once the moist humid days of summer were past, fishermen with their nets came to the strand in search of bounty from the sea, and Handy joined in this yearly expedition. Sometimes a lookout man was stationed about 100 yards from camp to wave a flag when he spotted fish. At his signal, the men would rush to the boat and push it into the waves, while someone on the strand held one end of the net. Four men rowed the boat as the seine thrower let down the net. The boat circled the fish and headed back to shore, when the fishermen pulled in their catch.

In the fall of 1888, Handy Edge and a group of men were on the strand at Ward's Fishery, now part of Ocean Drive. They had taken their boat out for several days but to no avail. "Where were the fish this year?" they wondered. The fishermen were becoming discouraged when one suggested that they pray. With knees in the soft white sand, washed clean by the ocean, the group made a sincere petition. Suddenly a great commotion was heard in the water. Startled, they looked up and saw fish everywhere. They stumbled and bumped into one another in their excitement to get to the boat. The seconds seemed an eternity, for never had they seen so many fish this close to shore.

The bowman, the second bowman, the midshipman and the stroke all rowed the boat, while the seine thrower let down the net as the fish swam toward them. These experienced fishermen did their job well, then headed back to shore. Slowly, inch by inch, the men towed in the net so it would not tear. Strong arms pulled and tugged for almost an hour, then began to ache. Finally, a huge pile of mullet and spot, with an occasional crab and pompano, flopped about in wild abandon on the strand. For two days the men cleaned fish, salting and placing them in barrels for winter storage. When the job was completed, everyone looked at one another in amazement.

One man said, "The Lord has been so good to us that I think we should build a brush arbor and continue the prayer meeting."

They all agreed and constructed a rectangular framework supported by poles. Branches cut from trees were placed on top of the frame, and the leaves provided shelter from the sun.

They continued the prayer meetings, and on October 10, 1888, a council consisting of Rev. Asa West, Rev. E.L. Patrick and Rev. D.M. Edge, with laymen I.P. "Handy" Edge Sr., A. Benton, and J.L. Todd, organized the praying fishermen into a church. Articles of faith and a church covenant were read and adopted. The church, named Mt. Ararat, received eleven charter members including Handy and Cenith. Rev. Patrick served as pastor for the first two years and Handy was elected deacon.

In 1889, H.J. Vereen donated an acre of land beside the old Kings Highway (Highway 17) in the Crescent Beach section for the first permanent house of worship. This building was commonly referred to as the "round top building" because of its unusual round roof. All that remains today is the cemetery, which provides easy identification of the site.

Almost half a century later, in 1938, Handy's son Purley, along with Rev. and Mrs. R.V. Ward of Wampee, would donate land on Highway in the Ocean Drive section of North Myrtle Beach for a new church site. Homer, Case, the husband of Handy's daughter Mollie, would haul logs from the mill and help build the church. The name would be changed from Mt. Ararat to First Baptist Church of Ocean Drive Beach. Years later when the beaches of Cherry Grove, Ocean Drive, Crescent, and Windy Hill would all be incorporated into the town of North Myrtle Beach, the church would become known as First Baptist Church of North Myrtle Beach.

### GROWING UP ON THE FARM

Handy and Cenith's children walked about two miles one way through the woods to the schoolhouse at the old



muster field in the community of Wampee. Mollie attended several years and then, because of her mother's failing eyesight, the young girl stayed home to take care of Belle, the baby at the time.

Few jobs were available in the early 1900s. With no skills and no money, the most advantageous place for the Edge children to work was on their father's spread. Several other scattered farms were located within a few miles, but the population was sparse. Transportation was slow and tedious, by horse and buggy or wagon. Most people simply "grew where they were planted."

Drucella (Cenith D.) Married Horace Vereen. She died in 1903 at age 27 after the birth of her second son. The baby lived only a short while, and the older son expired several years later.

Handy and Cenith were no strangers to sorrow, but as times improved, they became the centerpiece of a large family of children and grandchildren. Handy loved youngsters and made it a point to always have a handful of peanuts in his pocket to give to his grandchildren and others who came to visit.

#### ACCIDENTS AND HOME REMEDIES

Their grandson Hilburn, whose mother died when he was seven years old, often stayed with them. A lane led from the house to the main road and curved by the stalls and the wood pile. One warm summer day, Handy and Hilburn were talking as they walked down this lane past the althea tree and sweet-smelling cape jasmine bush. Hilburn suddenly stopped and his face turned white. He had stepped on a nail jutting through a board. When Handy looked at him, he knew the boy was in trouble as the nail was deeply impaled in his foot. Handy said in a very calm voice. "Don't be afraid. We can handle this. You just do what I tell you and it will be all right."

Handy stooped down, made sure he had the foot in the right position and said, "This is going to hurt a little bit, but it won't hurt long." He stood with his feet on each end of the

board and lifted Hilburn straight upward.

"I can carry you to the house," he said, "but I think it would be better if you walked to make your foot bleed a little."

He was so calm and convincing that the boy told him, "Yes, I can walk."

They sauntered to the house and Handy yelled, "Cene!" When his wife appeared on the porch, he said, "Get the kerosene. This boy has stepped on a nail."

In a few minutes she was back with a pan of kerosene. The three of them sat on the steps, and Hilburn placed his foot in the kerosene. Handy told him to sit still, and it would draw out all the poison.

When they thought it had soaked enough, Cenith placed a piece of salt pork over the wound and wrapped it with clean bandages made from old bed sheets. Hilburn's foot healed with no ill effects.

#### EYESIGHT AND INSIGHT

Cenith, a tall, slender attractive woman with dark, wavy hair tied gently in a bun at the back of her head, became blind in her later years. This handicap in no way affected her spirit and sense of humor. She continued her work about the house and though she had no formal training, enjoyed playing the organ for friends and relatives.

In winter, her grandchildren gathered around the large fireplace and roasted sweet potatoes or parched peanuts near the coals. Cenith entertained them by untying knots. The children tied knots in a string and watched her nimble finger pluck them out by touch. She liked to chew gum and would occasionally give a piece to a visiting grandchild. This was a great treat for the youngster. When she called on a special grandson to escort her around, he felt honored, and the others were jealous.

Even though she could not see, Cenith worked her garden and grew tasty vegetables. As mistress of the house, she retained the privilege of choosing the menu for each meal, although her daughters did the cooking.



One Saturday, her grandson Hilburn was visiting when Belle and Linnie asked their mother what to cook for dinner. Cenith began to talk but her rambling words had no association with food. She laughed at the queer sounds, then tried to speak again, but encountered the same results. Belle and Linnie thought it amusing, yet strange. They began a question-and-answer game, with their mother nodding or shaking her head until an understanding was reached about a menu.

That night Cenith had a stroke and for the final 11 years of her life would be unable to walk or speak. She was placed in a rocking chair, since no wheel chairs were available, and was pulled about the house. For meals she was pulled to the kitchen, which was joined to the bedroom part of the house, accessible only by a porch.

#### CHANGING LIFESTYLES

Handy died before Cenith. At the time of his death in 1924, some of his grown sons and daughters were still at home. The men worked the farm, while the housework and care of Cenith were left to Belle and Linnie. This situation changed in 1925 when Linnie accepted Edgar Gore's proposal of marriage.

Belle was devastated. She had been only three years old when Linnie was born, but she remembered proudly holding her little sister while sitting on the living room floor. They had played, worked and sometimes fussed with each other, but they had always been together. Not only would Belle lose a sister, but she would now shoulder the full responsibility of the housework and the care of her blind, invalid mother.

What may have seemed like a harsh fate actually produced a joyful character in Belle. As the years passed, she became a hub of hospitality, around which the rest of the Edges celebrated their family ties.

At his death, Handy's farm had been divided amongst the family members. Eventually, part of it was sold to Ocean Drive Estates. This company foresaw that, with the introduction of the automobile, the beach would soon become a popu-

lar attraction. About 1927 the company built a pavilion near the strand at Ocean Drive.

In the winter of 1929, Belle and Cenith went to live with Edgar and Linnie in the community of Wampee. In the spring, instead of moving back to the homestead, they, along with Bell's brothers Willie and Nath, moved to an upstairs apartment at the beach. The garage below was remodeled into a cafe, the first to be opened at Ocean Drive. Belle continued to care for her mother until Cenith's death on December 18th, 1930.

#### THE STRANGE LIGHT

Hilburn Edge was now a young lad in his teens and often walked along the beach. One evening he, along with his brother Leon, and their friend Clarence Branton, were walking home from the new pavilion at Ocean Drive by way of the strand. Stars dotted the sky and the almost full moon gave them enough light to identify landmarks. At a certain point they were to turn off the strand and follow a trail that led through the woods to the Edge house.

Suddenly, the three boys stopped in their tracks. A round, golden ball of light, like a big lamp light, was shining in the distance at Windy Hill. The light drifted slowly towards them, hovering about eight feet above the ocean and 100 yards away from the shore. At first the young boys just look in wonderment; then as it came nearer, goose bumps covered their skin.

Trying to be brave, Hilburn said, "Let's go closer to the water."

The others said, "I'm going home!" but curiosity held them spellbound.

As they watched, the light drifted slowly by them. When it reached Cherry grove beach, it suddenly flashed back to where it came from, then disappeared.

Hilburn later told his dad about the incident. "Yes, I have seen that light," he said, "and my father Handy also witnessed this strange event. Long before this area was developed, the story was told that Bluebeard had buried money in



the dunes, and the light is Bluebeard coming back to search for his treasure."

Sometime after Hilburn left home and entered the Navy, Leon found a large hold dug in the sand on the beach. Beside the opening lay a pile of bricks. Leon hauled them away, and they proved more than enough to make a tobacco barn furnace with a breastplate.

After discovery of the pit, the strange light was never again seen at the beach. The Edge family tradition holds that Bluebeard had finally found his treasure.

### THE DEPRESSION

Handy and Cenith's daughter Mollie and her husband, Homer Case, lived in Chadbourn, North Carolina. Homer's farm produced mouth watering strawberries and crisp cucumbers, which he sold on the market. He also grew tobacco. At the same time, Homer was employed at a filling station at a profitable salary and had bought a new house when the Depression hit in 1929. Soon, the produce market was no longer lucrative. The gas station folded and Homer lost his job, his new home and the farm.

In 1930 their daughters Mary and Mildred were 10 and 7, and their sons Dwight and Isaac were 19 and 16. At this time Homer made the decision to move to Ocean Drive Beach, into Handy and Cenith's old home place, though it had no electricity. A few years later they moved a house Willie Edge had built to the land Mollie inherited on Highway 17. This remodeled dwelling became their new home. The Grand Strand Shopping Center is located there today.

The children trudged a mile through the woods to catch their transportation to school in Wampee, on the present day Highway 90. The driver of the car that served as a school bus would not travel that last mile through the swamp road for fear of bogging down.

This was a lonely time for the two little girls, since the nearest neighbors lived about a mile away. One of the highlights of Mildred's day was to meet the mailman at the mail-

box, for he often stayed long enough to chat with her.

Homer, an experienced farmer, soon discovered that Horry County soil was good for growing fruits and vegetables. He began an open-air market on Highway 17, a few hundred yards from his house. His line of fruit included peaches and Young berries, a cross between a blackberry and a raspberry, and named for a Mr. Young who developed them.

When Homer went home for lunch, he left a note telling customers to place their money in the mailbox. Some Northerners on their way home from the beach did not trust this type of service, and when they came back the following year, paid him what they owed.

Homer also kept several dairy cows. He established a route of customers at the beach and regularly delivered milk, sometimes with the help of his daughter Mary.

Mollie was happy to live near her sisters Belle and Linnie. They loved one another dearly. Little excuse was needed for the families to get together, whether it be for a picnic at the beach or a cold winter's workday killing hogs.

### THE CAFE

Belle managed and often waited on customers in the cafe, a frequent gathering place for family and friends in the evening. Her nephew Dwight might come and play the ukelele, a present from his uncle Willie. This unusual instrument with strings could be picked like a guitar or played with a bow. Dwight called it his "funny little trick with a hold in the center." He carried it with him wherever he went. He liked to tell about taking it to Texas, going out on the street and playing it to attract a crowd. "Play some more," people would beg when he stopped, and he would tell them, "It will not play unless you put money in the hole on top."

The cafe was also host to more formal family gatherings, such as the 25th wedding anniversary of Homer and Millie Edge Case, as well as Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. Among the few other year-round residents of the beach were a Mrs. Finklea and Mr. and Mrs. White, who were invited to



Christmas dinner.

Mrs. Finklea was a widow, the sister of Congressman Gasque. The Whites were the owners of the water and light company. A windmill pumped the water, and a Delco plant supplied current to the few houses and buildings in the area. During the summers Mr. White turned off the power supply at midnight. The young folks at the pavilion would beg him to leave the lights on, but he would reply, "NO! I've got to go to bed, and you all are supposed to be in bed at 12 o'clock." When Mr. White retired, he sold the water company to Mollie's son Isaac Edge Case.

### THE PAVILION

Around 1928 Belle edge acquired the pavilion in Ocean Drive. This square, one-room, wood-frame building was constructed with a wrap-around porch and shuttered windows. Nearby, a drink stand also featured a wrap-around porch. A boardwalk ran some distance over the dunes from the pavilion.

Two rectangular bath houses, one for men and one for women, were located on the strand within a few yards of the pavilion. They were divided into individual dressing areas, with a shower in each building. The dressing rooms, and even a bathing suit, could be rented at the pavilion.

Belle asked Dwight Case, Mollie's son, to manage the pavilion in 1930 and 1931 and make arrangements with various orchestras and bands for the dances. an orchestra might come from Chadbourn or Florence. A Negro band from Myrtle Beach was hired on one occasion. Dwight moved the piano from their home to the pavilion for those who wished to play. An occasional square dance was held, but for the most part, the music was in the style of Lawrence Welk.

An admission was charged for the dance, but people came from miles around just to sit on the porch of the pavilion and listen "for free." The windows were open and one could watch the band and dancers. The music could be heard from quite a distance around the beach since there was virtually no

interference from traffic. Everyone like to see and be seen at the pavilion.

During intermission, the soft drink stand enjoyed a rush of business; then people strolled down the boardwalk. The pavilion was the gathering place for everyone, young, old and in-between. Sometimes concerts were held on Sunday afternoon or preaching on Sunday night. A Mr. Cashwell from Gastonia, North Carolina was one of the preachers.

As business at the beach began to prosper, plans were made for a new pavilion. In May of 1938, after Roberts Pavilion was built, Belle gave a two-year lease for her pavilion and drink stand to a man who remodeled the building into a skating rink. When the skating rink first opened, Belle went skating and broke her wrist. Thereafter, she decided to leave skating to the more experienced. The second year must have proved unsuccessful, because the businessman holding the lease skipped town without paying his rent.

The two rectangular bath houses were moved across the street. One was remodeled into a grocery store and the other became Ocean Drive's first hardware store, operated by Handy's youngest son, Purley Edge. After several years the two stores were moved off the land, and Belle leased that choice piece of property at the corner of Main and the Boulevard. The new owner built The Beach Shop.

Belle eventually had the old pavilion and drink stand torn down and leased the property to an amusement company for the summer season. Years later she sold the property.

### GROCERY STORES AND ROAD BUILDING

Increasing numbers of year-round residents and summer vacationers brought the need for new businesses along the north strand. Willie Edge and Herbert ward became associates in the grocery-store business. They even built their own road, which today is First Avenue South in Ocean Drive. Using hand scoops pulled by mules, they scooped out the dirt and hauled it to fill in holes and make the ground level. Their partnership did not last long, however, and Willie opened a



grocery store on Main Street where the present day Hoskins Restaurant is located. Herbert Ward continued to manage the original store on the other side of the street.

In 1933 the local economy was picking up. People were hired to work on the dredge being used to build the intracoastal waterway, and others joined the crew constructing Highway 17, which ran parallel to the coast. Willie paid his niece Mary Case, \$3 a week to help in the grocery store. On the Fourth of July, 1935, they worked very hard all day and took in a handsome \$37.74.

#### THE POST OFFICE

A country store served two functions: it was both a means of obtaining supplies and a gathering place for people to meet and talk about local happenings. It was the most logical place to operate a post office.

In the early days when Ocean Drive had no post office, the mailman simply dumped all the mail on the counter at Willie's store. Confusion resulted as each person pulled and sorted to find his letters. Mary simplified this by sorting the mail herself and looking for a letter when a person asked for it. Willie was finally made postmaster, and the first canceled mail left Ocean Drive on March 16, 1937. After the post office was established, boxes were made, and Mary placed the letters in them in alphabetical order. Mary, who handled the mail, suggested to Willie that he buy some boxes so that customers might rent them. When Willie's health failed Mary was appointed the official postmistress for six months, beginning in September 1941.

In the early 1940s Willie installed a telephone in the store, the only phone in the area. A Mr. Gasque owned the phone and the line. A fee was charged to deliver messages. The cost to find a person and deliver a message in Cherry Grove Beach was 75 cents. Business people were beginning to develop land in the area and use the phone to call their stockbrokers.

#### BELLE EDGE

During the time Willie was short of help, Belle assisted him in the store and also worked in the post office. She managed her boarding house over the cafe, where patrons received room and board for \$2.50 a week. When the cook did not arrive, she might prepare meals herself for as many as six to twelve adults, usually boarders and men working nearby. Crabs and oysters for some of the meals came from the nearby creek. She often bought fresh fish from the fishermen on the strand.

Plumbing was installed in Belle's new rental apartments, and she bought the furnishings, including a stove (heater) and rug. The stove was installed in the winter and taken down in summer, and the rug was stored away in summer. Sometimes help was employed to assist her in cleaning the apartments, but when the maid failed to arrive, she could manage alone.

Family, neighbors and friends spent many delightful hours talking and playing Chinese checkers at Belle's house. Her warm personality, her sense of humor, and her love of people drew visitors almost every night.

Going in "bathing" at the beach with neighbors or walking on the strand with friends were popular pastimes for Belle. She attended the Big Apple Dance at the pavilion, the fairs at Loris and Conway, and the State Fair in Columbia. She went boat riding on Half Moon Lake and accompanied friends to the movies in Loris, Conway and Myrtle Beach.

In the summer of 1939, when the amusement rides came to the beach, Belle decided that the hobby horses were tame enough to ride. Some of her most delightful times were shared with friends on a picnic at the state park or the beach.

Belle's faith was genuine and she loved her church. She worked on a rotating basis with other members, sweeping or cleaning the building and the cemetery. When the minister, Mr. Arnette, came to preach, which was often, he was always welcome at her bountiful dinner table.

The Christmas season brought on a flurry of activity at



the church. Bags were made to hold the toys that were gathered for all the neighborhood children. The big event was "The Christmas Tree," a party held at the church for everyone, young and old. Ocean baptisms were another special event, even during the month of October.

Belle liked to travel and in 1933, went with a tour group to the World's Fair in Chicago. January 1937 found her returning from Statesville, North Carolina. Another time she went to Augusta, Georgia, with her nephew Hilburn Edge and his wife, Nathalie. Belle had no car, but in July of 1937 she obtained her driver's license.

These and other trips were just a respite from a busy schedule. July was the time to can peaches. With the arrival of November's cool days, the woods were searched for wild grapes. In the coldest weather of December or January, Mollie's husband killed hogs. Belle made souse meat, sometimes called hog-head cheese, and liver pudding. Souse meat was made by cooking the hog's head (sousing it) in boiling water and taking the meat off the bone. The meat was ground, mixed well with seasoning, including generous amounts of home-grown hot red pepper, and placed in a container left in a cold place. The souse meat became firm enough to cut in slices and serve cold, usually with hot pepper vinegar.

Liver pudding was made from the boiled liver ground up and mixed with onions, corn meal and seasonings, again generous with red pepper. Sometimes it was made into a loaf or stuffed into a hand-cleaned casing (the small intestine of the hog). It could be fried and eaten for breakfast with grits.

The custom for Thanksgiving and Christmas was to bake cakes about a week before the holidays and place them in the safe, a cupboard-like piece of furniture, sometimes enclosed on the front by a wire screen to keep the contents "safe" from the flies, as there were no refrigerators. This was the task in which Belle enlisted the aid of one of her neighbors or her sisters Linnie or Mollie. By the end of the day, five or more cakes, all made by adding each ingredient separately and patiently by hand, tempted bystanders.

A turkey with all the trimmings was on the Thanksgiving menu for the entire Edge family, who came for dinner at Belle's along with the neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. White and Mrs. Finklea. The meal was even more splendid at Christmas when Belle was a gracious hostess to about 40 people.

## SOCIAL LIFE

Several ladies decided they would like to have a social event for the local women, so they organized a Birthday Club. The first meeting was held February 3, 1938, attended by Mrs. Finklea, Mrs. L.H. White, Mollie Case, Linnie Gore and Belle Edge. The meeting was held once a month at the home of one of the members.

In February the following year, when the Birthday Club met with Mrs. Gasque, the ladies organized a Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). In connection with their Southern Baptist Church, this organization promoted mission work. When the WMU met at Belle's in July of 1941, twenty members were present.

The sewing circle met sporadically, and ladies worked on aprons, pillow cases, dresses or a quilt.

## WHEELS

In August of 1939, Belle made a decision that drastically changed her lifestyle: she bought a Plymouth. The following month, Germany attacked Poland, then within three months crushed six countries: Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and France. Residents of these countries with relatives in America often wanted to notify them of the progress of the war. Belle had bought her car just in time to deliver telegraph messages that came through the mail. She also became a kind of local "taxi" with occasional patrons paying her to take them to town. With the aid of her new transportation, Belle began selling Avon products and silverware. During the month of December she also sold Christmas cards.



## OUT OF THE DEPRESSION, INTO THE WAR

Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the United States into the war and changed forever the lives of Horry County residents.

On May 15, 1941, four thousand officers and enlisted men of the Coast Artillery Brigade, along with their equipment, began moving from Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, to a camp at Windy Hill Beach for target practice. They fired guns at a sleeve target, a cloth cylinder towed by an airplane.

Rumors that the government needed a large tract of land for training grounds and a bombing range created uneasiness among the farmers. The concern was well founded. By January 1, 1942, the United States District Court had served an order to the owners of 54,000 acres declaring that the United States of America was entitled to possession of their land.

The result of this order was that about 300 families were displaced in the area lying east of Highway 90 between Conway and Wampee, the inland waterway and the railroad tracks running parallel to the present Highway 501. The east side of this tract bordered the land where Handy and Cenith had lived.

Belle's brother Nath, bought a battery-powered radio on December 10, 1941, to keep up with the war news. Registration was held at a schoolhouse in each community for war-rationing books to buy sugar, gas, tires and coffee. The base allotment for sugar for the first eight weeks was a half pound per person per week.

Belle attended meetings at the old pavilion to learn the procedures to follow during blackouts and air raids. The buildings on the beach were required to have black shades, and blackouts were in effect after certain hours. Cars were driven with the top half of their headlights blacked out. The precautions were taken because U-boats or submarines were thought to be in the waters off the coast, and the government wanted to conceal the areas of heaviest population for fear of attack.

To help the war effort, Belle bought defense stamps and when the stamp book was full, turned it in for a savings bond.

The war brought a flurry of new construction to the beach. Families within a two-hour drive saved their gas-rationing stamps and came for a short vacation. Belle stayed busy cleaning apartments amid a steady flow of rentals. On May 30, 1942, the Douglas MacArthur Hotel opened in Ocean Drive just in time for the summer season.

For Bell, the excitement of the progress at the beach was dampened by the loss of brother Willie, who died of a stroke on August 6, 1942.

The war was scattering her nieces and nephews. On January 13, 1943, Belle's nephew Isaac was hired at the naval shipyard in Wilmington, North Carolina. A niece's husband moved his family to Charleston in 1943 where he was employed in defense work. Belle's nephew Leroy Edge, was killed in France.

After the war the "bombing range," as it was called, was thoroughly searched for live ammunition and cleared of all equipment used by the Army Air Corps. By 1949 the government was ready to sell the entire acreage, and the previous owners were given first option to buy their property back. Some accepted the offer, but others were already settled elsewhere.

## HAZEL, A DANGEROUS WOMAN

Each passing year brought increasing business to the beach. In 1954 Belle felt sure that her rental apartments would be secure while she left with a group of ladies for a week in Florida. Her brother Nath could manage the house. But Belle had not counted on a visit from Hurricane Hazel.

Linnie's son, Eugene Gore, was employed at Spotless Cleaners and his wife, Louise, worked for the Santee Cooper Power Company, which had its office on Main Street in Ocean Drive. Housed in the same building was Hosking Restaurant, a gathering place for firemen and rescue workers on this particular day. When Eugene and Louise left for work at 7:45 the morning of October 15th, the wind was blowing strong and



waves were washing over the boulevard. shortly after they arrived at the Santee Cooper office, the power went out.

Eugene became concerned about his Uncle Nath, who was at home alone. He braved the heavy winds to the house which was on another street about 100 yards directly in front of the power company building. His uncle refused to leave.

About 8:30 a big tree, located between the nearby Platt house and the power company, blew over, and Louise thought, "That's a hurricane. That's all the damage there will be."

Eugene again struggled over to bring his uncle to safer quarters, but the older man was determined to stay home.

Louise was concerned about the furnishings in their apartment, so Eugene and the service man at Santee Cooper tried to reach the apartment to remove valuables. By then the water was so high that it was impossible to get anywhere near the building.

The tops of trees began to snap, and Eugene battle the gale once more to see about Nath. This time his uncle was wearing a coat and anxious to seek safer lodging.

A distress call came from the boulevard. Four women on vacation had refused to leave their apartment and had been washed out by the surging ocean waves and almost drowned. Firemen brought them to Hoskins Restaurant.

A friend kept reporting to Eugene and Louise and at one time told them, "Water is now waist deep in your apartment." He came back to tell them another time, "Your apartment is washed off the foundation." Eventually it was turned completely around.

Employees at the power company and Hoskings Restaurant were anxious to see what was happening down Main Street and the intersection of the boulevard. People stood outside holding on to any stationary object within reach as the high winds blew. They watched in awe as the power of the waves broke buildings loose from their foundations and washed them out to sea. The ocean water came a block and a half down Main Street. Angry waves splashed over the traffic

light that hung about 16 feet above the boulevard.

Around 11:30 a.m. the wind became calm. Not a single breeze blew anywhere. "We knew that we should not venture away from the building during the eye of the storm," Louise said. "After a few minutes the wind began to blow again, and more fiercely this time."

"I saw the drug store crumble," Eugene recalled. "The waves just took it."

Nothing more than a single wall separated Eugene and Louise's duplex apartment from the one next door. In one of the strange events of the hurricane, their apartment suffered only water damage, but the furniture in the other apartment was completely destroyed and piled in one corner of the room. Louise's iron frying pan washed away, and when the building was being placed back on the foundation, the pan was discovered under the house. The refrigerator turned over, breaking the butter dish but leaving the eggs intact.

The home of Belle's brother Purley Edge, had been located on the front row near the beach. It floated three blocks down the boulevard, then floated back and traveled west toward Highway 17, then back towards the ocean. The house was discovered in the street in front of the Presbyterian church. There was an apple on the bar between the kitchen and dining room. No repairs were necessary. Purley had it moved back to its original site onto a new foundation.

In the hurricane's aftermath, the entire beach was a hodgepodge of houses. Clothes hung in trees. Utility poles were torn down. Power and telephone lines were strewn over piles of lumber and concrete blocks that had once been buildings. Only two front-row houses were left standing along the several-mile stretch from Cherry Grove Beach to Windy Hill Beach.

Hurricane Hazel had hit a few days after full moon on a high tide. Nine and one-tenth inches of rain fell within a 20-hour period. Winds were recorded at 130 miles per hour in the Ocean Drive area. After the blow, the sea was almost apolo-



getically calm under a cloudy sky. Later that day the sun came out. Huge conch shells by the hundreds lay on the strand.

More than 650 officers and men of the South Carolina National Guard were deployed to Horry County. One hundred extra emergency maintenance crew members came from Columbia, Charleston and Darlington to help restore power. The Red Cross handled messages from 30 of the 48 states, plus Alaska, Canada and Japan.

The army engineers arrived, 250 to 300 of them, to begin clearing the debris. The attitude of the residents was one of resolute determination to start rebuilding immediately.

Only one storm-related casualty was recorded in North Myrtle Beach, but the town was left in ruins. Hurricane Hazel was ranked as the eighth most destructive hurricane in US history.

Belle returned from Florida a few days after the disaster to find no damage done to her house.

#### CHRISTMAS PAST

In 1962, some weeks after Linnie's husband died, she moved in with Belle and Nath. The two sisters were together again after all those years.

As Belle grew older and the Edge family became more numerous, Christmas was celebrated at the home of various family members. In 1971, Eugene and Louise built a house on Cenith drive in Ocean Drive Beach. This spacious dwelling became the gathering place for Christmas dinners.

One Christmas day as everyone sat around the table enjoying the special holiday dinner, Belle and Linnie suddenly grew very quiet, but they continued to eat. Their heads began to nod, and Belle, when she spoke, sounded like a phonograph record running down. Everyone looked at each other, not knowing what to do. Suddenly two nephews, Eugene and Carlyle, jumped up, helped the ladies to the car and rushed them to the emergency room. The doctor wisely diagnosed the situation and withdrew all their medication.

A few days later the sisters confessed. Both diabetics, they had decided to eat sweets at Christmas dinner, took a double dose of their medication and had almost gone into a coma.

#### THE AUTUMN OF LIFE

Alva died in 1947. Mollie passed away in 1959, Purley in 1966 and Nath, the following year. The Edge family had a policy that when a family member died, the survivors held a conference to decide how to disperse the estate. According to an agreement among the relatives, Belle was to have first choice of any available lots. They felt that this was compensation for caring for their mother. So it came about that Belle acquired a considerable amount of property in the Ocean Drive area. She was an efficient manager, taking advantage of the best opportunities while leasing her lots and apartments. In later years when her business matters became a burden, she engaged three of her relatives to form a trust and handle her affairs.

One of Belle's concerns was her church. When newcomers arrived in the community, she made their acquaintance and invited them to services. If transportation was a problem, she became a willing taxi. Her smiling face was always present at Sunday services and quarterly union meetings. She was an influential member of the WMU and a willing worker in Bible School. A Sunday School class was named in her honor. Through the foresight of the men who were in charge of her trust, her wishes were granted. She became a most generous benefactor to the First Baptist Church of North Myrtle Beach.

A cook and housekeeper was hired when Belle and Linnie's health began to fail. Belle gradually became unable to feed herself, but she never became disagreeable. Relatives and friends attest to her sweet spirit until she died on October 12, 1984. Linnie was in a nursing home about eight years and died on April 24, 1994 at age 100.

Numerous descendants of Handy and Canith still live in North Myrtle beach and other parts of the county. In 1997, the phone book listed 95 people under the name of Edge alone. Many of them remain a visible contributing element in the churches and the community.



## Glossary

akimbo—with the hands on the hips and the elbows bent outward  
allotment—the amount of tobacco permitted by the government to be grown on a farm  
angina—health problems concerning the heart  
artesian well—a very deep well with pressure so strong that the water flows continuously  
bay—an embankment to retain water  
benefactor—a person who has given money or kindly help  
bluff—a high, steep bank of cliff on the shore of a river, lake or sea  
caulked (caulk)—to fill up a crack so that it will not leak  
chores—small routine tasks; sometimes they are given by parents to children  
cistern—an artificial container for storing water  
clientele—a regular group of customers  
combine (COM-bine)—a machine that takes the grain off the stalk  
cruising—to survey a forest to estimate the amount and value of the timber  
devastated—discouraged; very hurt  
dressed cow—when the meat is cut up and prepared for sale to customers who will use it for cooking  
ethic—moral character related to custom or habit  
felicity—happiness  
foot log—a log to walk on over a small stream  
herbicide—a toxic chemical used to kill weeds  
hodgepodge—a disorderly mixture; mess; jumble  
Hospice—an organization that offers help to people in their final days of an incurable disease  
Hun—a term of contempt used to refer to a German  
innovative—introducing a new way of doing things  
jowl—a fold of flesh hanging from the jaw

lucrative—bringing in money; profitable  
patronage—regular business given by customers  
peddling (peddler)—a man who travels about selling things that he carries in a pack on a truck, wagon or cart  
pristine—as it was in its earliest time or state  
privy—a small outhouse  
proficient—skilled in any subject; an expert  
sauntered—to walk along slowly; stroll  
scour—to look in every part of; search  
sooty (soot)—a collection of black substance in the smoke from burning oil, wood, coal, etc.  
squall—a sudden, violet gust of wind, often with rain  
tandem—one ahead of the other, in single file